

# OPINION/EDITORIAL

## We have a mission...

For a little old country girl from the Blackland Prairie I have had the opportunity to meet a lot, and I mean a lot, of famous people. Most of the time it was because I am not shy and because I am married to a lifelong journalist who has often been on an 'A' list that blessed us with opportunity.

Now you may not feel that my celebrity list is all that impressive, but I hug the memories with glee and am just too giddy from the latest opportunity not to share it with you, my friends and neighbors.

First let's see if I can remember just some of the folks old Jimmy Bardwell has positioned me to meet: rock star Peter Frampton (anniversary gift), '70s pop star B.J. Thomas (he's my distant cousin), astronauts Alan Shepard, Gordon Cooper, Scott Carpenter and Wally Schirra. (Wally even winked at me! For a baby boomer who grew up on the space race that was the thrill of a lifetime.) I also met the first woman in space Sally Ride.

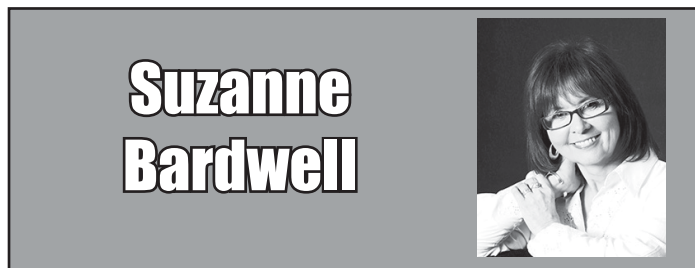
Then through our Disney World press trips when Jim worked at the Longview News Journal I stood in a buffet line with Larry King (he called me "sugar" and passed me a fork), spent at least an hour visiting with the original "Battlestar Galactica" Apollo played by the absolutely gorgeous Richard Hatch who told me all about the reboot FX Galactica where he would play the vice president. (I have my picture with him to prove it!) I met the actors who played Chewbacca, R2D2 and C3PO when I took our young son to a sci-fi convention.

"Mr. Bojangles" singer Jerry Jeff Walker fell off a stage into my lap but he was passed out at the time so I don't know if that counts. I met movie star hunk Hugh Jackman in a blizzard on Broadway while on a school trip, mmm-hmmm. More authors and politicians than I can shake a stick at. And gee...you must have stopped reading awhile back.

On Friday night Jimmy and I were introduced to CBS News legend Bob Schieffer. Turns out he is just a good old boy from Fort Worth who has received the Edward R. Murrow Award, eight Emmys for broadcast journalism, and was named a "Living Legend" by the Library of Congress.

Old East Texas journalist Jim Bardwell kicked back with the legendary reporter in Friday's hospitality room for over an hour and got regaled with stories of presidents, saints and sinners in government service. I would have loved to hear those stories in person but I was entertaining another journalist, a young reporter whom I admire that works for the Denton Chronicle.

Dalton LaFerne was on my last high school newspaper/yearbook staff in 2013. That year I took the 'Fab Five' outstanding student journalists to the high school Interscholastic Press Association convention where I introduced Dalton to Pulitzer Prize winning photo-journalist John Moore and that meeting changed the course of Dalton's future. Friday night I introduced Dalton to living legend Bob Schieffer.



**Suzanne Bardwell**



Maybe someday, someone will be introducing a young student to this young man who will have inspired them to dedicate their lives to a profession whose mission was mandated by the Founding Fathers to protect their new creation of democracy.

And folks that is still our mission. After all, whether it is the Washington Post covering our nation's capitol or this hometown newspaper covering the local city government and elected officials we ultimately have YOUR protection and interests as our driving force. Government transparency will NOT exist without the press. It is the reason that the ONLY privately owned business specifically protected in the Constitution of the United States is the PRESS. It's right there in the first amendment where our most sacred rights are protected.

If you are a part of the ill-informed 40 percent who don't know these rights commit them to heart NOW! It is what wars have been fought for throughout our history. The first amendment guarantees freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom to petition the government, freedom to assemble AND freedom of the Press to protect all the others. The press is there to protect YOU, the citizen, the taxpayer. We serve your interests. Mr. Schieffer may have said it best when he was sharing his thoughts with 250 publishers and editors from across the state of Texas:

"We are not the opposition party, I do not consider myself an enemy of the American people. I consider myself an American citizen. Our job is to get to the truth and make sure the message of officials for the people is true. We have a mission and that is it."

## THE ECONOMIST

By Dr. M. Ray Perryman

### Data

The partial shutdown of the federal government continues. (While it would be good news indeed if it's reopened by the time you're reading this, as I am writing both sides are digging in their heels and hardly listening to each other, so it may well persist.)

Headlines are replete with the fallout from some 800,000 federal employees either staying home or being forced to work without pay.

The financial hardships for these individuals and families are mounting, and many are struggling to find alternative ways to make some interim cash. Even if they are ultimately paid, most Americans would be hard pressed to deal with an unexpected stoppage of pay, and these federal workers are no exception. Things don't simply go back to normal when you are paid retroactively.

In addition to the trash piling up, monuments and museums remaining closed, and other nuisances, the intensity of a long shutdown is now being felt across many industries. Fewer federal inspectors on the job are delaying approval of everything from craft beers to aircraft maintenance inspections. Applications of many types are stalled and it will take time for agencies to catch up. Initial public offerings can't happen, often disrupting years of meticulous planning.

One area which may not be directly affecting a large number of people but is indirectly affecting virtually everyone is the production of government data. Numbers junkies like me rely on the timely and accurate release of thousands of datapoints to formulate estimates of economic activity and projections of future patterns. Obviously, I would notice.

Beyond the arcane realm of econometric folk, however, decision-makers across the spectrum directly rely heavily on federal data. Population estimates, industry trends, and thousands of other data series come into play as businesses attempt to make optimal operations and investment decisions. Many contracts have terms that are triggered by economic data, and it plays a critical role in monetary policy, lending decisions, and many other aspects of our daily lives. Although some agencies are operating pretty much as normal (including the Bureau of Labor Statistics), others are not. We (or, at least, you, unless your social life is similar to mine) may not see it and think about it all the time (for your sake, I hope not), but rest assured that you are profoundly affected by it.

The bottom line is that the little-noticed effects of the shutdown are beginning to compound. Even if it ends tomorrow, it will take some time to work through backlogs and get things back on track. It's past time for meaningful dialogue and a return to full functioning for the federal government. In the world's greatest democracy, that should be table stakes.

**Dr. M. Ray Perryman is President and Chief Executive Officer of The Perryman Group (www.perrymangroup.com). He also serves as Institute Distinguished Professor of Economic Theory and Method at the International Institute for Advanced Studies.**

## SCHOOL CALENDARS

GISD Calendar	UGISD Calendar
<p><b>1/30, Wednesday</b> GMS Progress Reports NHS Carnation sales 9 a.m. Special Olympics BB Tourney</p> <p><b>1/31, Thursday</b> 8 a.m. GHS Picture Retakes-Aud. 5 p.m. GMS B BB@Home 5:30 p.m. B Soccer vs. Carlisle-H</p> <p><b>2/1, Friday</b> GMS Basketball Team Pics Gladewater Tennis Round Robin 5/6 p.m. B &amp; G BB vs. White Oak-H</p> <p><b>2/4, Monday</b> 11:12 a.m.-12:31 p.m. Balfour Class Ring Delivery</p> <p><b>2/5, Tuesday</b> Weldon Elementary Group &amp; Spring Pictures 5/6 p.m. JV/V G BB@Harmony 5 p.m. G Soccer vs. Henderson-H</p> <p><b>2/8, Friday</b> Solo &amp; Ensemble@PT</p>	<p>Kilgore Varsity Tennis Tourney 4:30/7 p.m. Baseball@Van 5/6:15 p.m. JV/V Boys BB@West Rusk</p> <p><b>2/9, Saturday</b> 6 pm. Spotlight on GHS</p> <p><b>2/1, Friday</b> 4 p.m. JV/V G&amp;B BB@Harleton 5:30 p.m. HS Softball@Van</p> <p><b>2/2, Saturday</b> B&amp;G Powerlifting@Sabine</p> <p><b>2/3, Sunday</b> San Angelo Ag Mechanics Contest</p> <p><b>2/4, Monday</b> San Angelo Ag Mechanics Contest JH B BB@Overton 4 p.m. JV/V Baseball@Cumberland Academy</p> <p><b>2/5, Tuesday</b> San Angelo Ag Mechanics Contest 5 p.m. HS Lions BB vs. Carlisle 5 p.m. HS Softball@Pine Tree</p>

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Say goodbye to another small business

Say goodbye to another small business in Gladewater, the defeat of a couple's dream of owning and operating an independent endeavor, another battle lost to the fabric of what was the mainstay of American middle class small town merchants. The family friendly Old Time Feed and Mercantile, run by Christina and Greg Wilson, is surrendering, throwing in the towel. Nearly all such places, sometimes called mom and pop stores, are more than mere occupations; they are labors of love and usually demand almost 24/7 attention. So it was with them.

When we reflect on all these small businesses that are no longer among us, a print shop, several auto repairs, upholstery, drug stores, various eateries, etc., it becomes readily apparent that the days of their existence may be limited.

Even the very journal you are reading this in leads a precarious life. The proprietors, Jim and Suzanne Bardwell, give themselves wholeheartedly. They believe in small town newspapers so much so that they have taken on two more. The news gathering in Gladewater, writing it, and getting it in print is a full-time job. They intend to do the same in Lindale and White Oak. We wish them success with the knowledge that it's an uphill battle. Rest assured they are just as married to their paper as all small business owners are to their enterprise.

There are many factors in the demise of a small businesses but a major issue is competing with the big chain stores such as Atwood's and Tractor Supply. Independents spend far too much time trying to explain to customers why their sack of feed is 75 cents higher than the Walmart type stores. But they are right here in town, not miles away in Longview, Kilgore or Tyler. Anyone with a basic knowledge of economics should realize that a single facility does not, cannot, ever have the buying power of hundreds of stores. And therein lies the problem; volume is the name of the game.

And that's the way of the world. Most funeral homes, pharmacies, nursing homes, hospitals, etc. are owned by chains—conglomerates that have swallowed up the mom and pops. Most newspapers, TV and radio stations, gas stations, even restaurants are corporate owned. Even that mainstay of American independence, farms and ranches, have fallen prey to it.

Indeed, many of the so called "brick and mortar" establishments are challenged today by the rise of online shoppers and while that may be the wave of the future, I doubt that UPS and FedEx are looking forward to delivering horse and cow feed to my barn and I

for one am not looking forward to driving many miles to get it at the large chains in large towns.

The uniqueness, individuality, and the personal relationship between customer and merchant is quickly disappearing. Your wood burning stove, rocking chair, and the peanut chasing dog will be sorely missed. So fare the well, Greg and Christina, and I pray we don't all end up as mere employees/customers of the chain stores.

Jim Jones  
Gladewater

### Thank you school board members

As we conclude January's School Board Recognition Month, Gladewater ISD would like to join the Texas Association of School Boards and other districts across the state to honor the countless contributions of these locally elected advocates for Texas schoolchildren and public schools.

School board members tackle a difficult job and shoulder enormous responsibilities. These men and women are elected to establish the policies that provide the framework of our public schools. They provide vision and leadership in their roles as advocates, and they will continue to stand up for public education and guard against anything that takes away from our children or undermines our public schools.

Board members serving Gladewater ISD are: Jon Keller-president, Rickie Blackmon-vice president, George Glenn-secretary, Garth Cockerell, David Floyd, Jamie Cook and Ross Morgan.

Our district benefits from the tireless work and countless hours contributed by these local citizens who work without pay. Serving as a crucial link between the community and classroom our board is responsible for an annual budget of \$18 million, 1,805 students, 304 employees and four campuses.

It's more important than ever before that the public support public education so that today's students are prepared to be productive citizens and the leaders of tomorrow. Please take a moment and tell school board members thanks for caring about our children and giving so much to our community. Let them know we support them and that their dedicated service is recognized and truly appreciated, and not just in January.

Sedric Clark  
Gladewater Independent School District Superintendent

**TA**  
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